DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 371 314 CS 011 743

TITLE	Stakeholder Group Formed To Support Reading for Middle Grades Students [and] Putting Together the Pieces of the Puzzle.
INSTITUTION	Middle Grades Reading Network, Evansville, IN.
PUB DATE	Oct 93
NOTE	7p.; Photographs may not reproduce clearly.
PUB TYPE	Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT	NetWords; n2 p1-4,6-7 Oct 1993
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Early Adolescents; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; *Middle Schools; Parent Participation; Professional Development; Reading Interests; *Recreational Reading; School Business Relationship
IDENTIFIERS	*Indiana; Middle Schools Reading Network (Indiana); *Reading Motivation

ABSTRACT

This document consists of an article and a two-page illustration "Putting Together the Pieces of the Puzzle." Noting that individual schools and communities throughout Indiana continue to struggle to meet the needs of young adolescents, the article discusses the work of the Stakeholder Steering Committee of the Middle Grades Reading Network. Noting that the goal of the Stakeholders is to tackle the logistical barriers that stand in the way of Indiana's becoming a community of readers for young people, the article lists members of the committee and 10 areas of common ground of the 8 Stakeholder groups as well as the individualized plans of the 8 groups involving: business/school collaboration, Indiana Reading Professors, Indiana State Reading Association, Nonformal Educators, parents, public librarians, schools, and school library media specialists. An illustration lists goals of public libraries, role models, reading environment, professional development, time, access to books, community, and parents. (RS)

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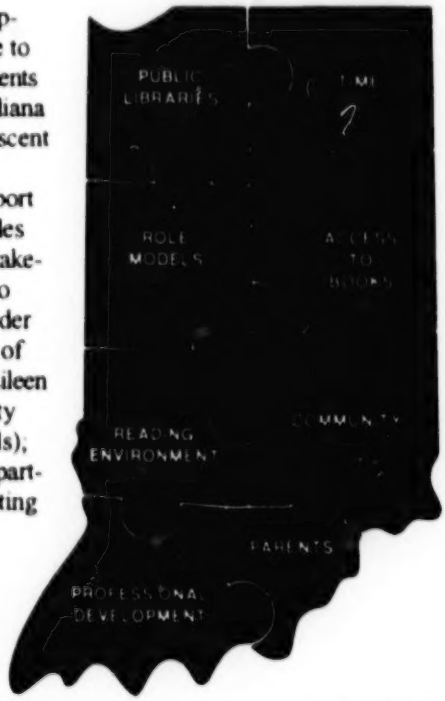
Stakeholder Group Formed to Support Reading for Middle Grades Students

ED 371 314

Throughout Indiana, individual schools and their communities struggle to meet the reading needs of young adolescents. Schools, public libraries, parents, and community groups and organizations provide a variety of programs, but most work in situations where resources and recognition are inadequate. We need to work in close collaboration with one another. Such a collective approach is necessary if we are to isolate and uncover the elements essential to developing in Indiana a community of young adolescent readers.

In order to increase support for reading, the Middle Grades Reading Network formed a Stakeholder Steering Committee to develop plans for a Stakeholder organization. The members of the Steering Committee are Eileen Baker, Richmond Community Schools (representing schools); Linda Cornwell, Indiana Department of Education (representing school library media specialists); Marge Keltner, Hammond Public Schools (representing the Indiana State Reading Association); Linda Kolb, Indiana Library Federation (representing public librarians); Barbara Poore, consultant (representing business/school collaboration); Carl Smith, Indiana University (representing parents); Linda Snyder, Franklin College (representing Indiana Reading Professors); and Gail Thomas Strong, Indiana Youth Institute (representing nonformal educators).



The goal of the Stakeholders is to tackle the logistical barriers that stand in the way of Indiana's becoming a Community of Readers for young people. These barriers include lack of funding and community awareness as well as problems with curricular organization and school structure.

The Stakeholder Steering Committee worked with William R. Moon of Wayne, Pennsylvania, to develop plans for a Stakeholder meeting. They selected the Stakeholders and completed plans for a conference that was held at the Abe Martin Lodge in Brown County State Park on July 13-15, 1993.

The conference provided the opportunity for all Stakeholder groups to meet simultaneously. Not only did the Stakeholder groups focus individually on their own areas of concern, but together they looked at all aspects of their organizations to discover common values and aspirations.

"We looked together at our history, where we came from and how that affects us, our organizations, and our worlds. We looked at the present, what is going on right now that makes a difference to us. We created an ideal future, what we really want to have come true that we believe is doable and that we are willing to work for."

Continued on page 2...

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Stakeholders continued...

That ideal future is a Community of Readers where young adolescents have excellent reading role models; access to all kinds of interesting, current, and useful books and other reading materials; effective reading instruction; parents who attend to their children's reading needs; and exciting reading opportunities in school, after school, and during the summer.

After two days of intense work, the following ten areas are the common ground of the eight Stakeholder groups. The ten items are in alphabetical order rather than in order of importance.

- **Access to books**
- **Collaboration**
- **Community, youth service agency, political, and business support**
- **Funding-stream realignment**
- **Parent involvement**
- **Role modeling**
- **Staff development (role enhancement)**
- **Staffing**
- **Technology as a learning tool**
- **Time for reading**

Bill Moon, conference facilitator, with Suellen Reed and school librarians.

The eight Stakeholder groups also made their own individualized plans. The following represents the results of their brainstorming and free-flow of ideas :

Business/School Collaboration

- Investigate successful models in our state that could focus on adolescent reading.
  Who: Steering Committee
  By: October 15, 1993

- Determine resources needed to implement those models for the Reading Network--i.e., expertise, training.
  Who: Middle Grades Reading Network Executive Committee
  By: December 1, 1993

- Disseminate information about models and assistance available to do them to the Network membership.
  Who: Middle Grades Reading Network staff
  By: Spring 1994

Indiana Reading Professors

- Staff Development
  - Create data base of potential consultants to work with schools.
  - Showcase the latest in young adult literature for pre-service and in-service for educators and parents.
  - Encourage interdisciplinary thematic reading.
  - Eliminate "policing" of reading--experience the joy.

- Communication
  - Disseminate list of potential consultants.
  - Circulate young adult book lists through classes and in-service.
  - Communicate by newsletter with Indiana Reading Professors membership about developments in young adult literature.
  - Dedicated column in the Indiana Reading Quarterly for educators of young adults.
  - Feature in the Indiana Reading Quarterly on Stakeholders' conference and ongoing updates.

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·Role model to classes through showcases and read alouds
·First book showcasing at MS/Sec institute at Indiana State Reading Association Conference
·Press release to local papers

Indiana State Reading Association

- Goal Access to Books
  ·Articles in Indiana State Reading Association publications highlighting ways to provide this access
  ·Provide book lists to all
  ·Design an incentive program to provide a "special" book to conference participants and local councils

- Goal Role Models
  ·Recruitment of middle grades teachers as members--change the image of IRA
  ·Provide good conferences--and sessions for middle grades teachers
  ·Provide support to local councils to develop middle grades support

- Goal Collaboration, i.e., Outreach
  ·Invite other organizations to speak at our meetings and ask to speak at their meetings
  ·Work toward joint planning for middle grades teachers in all subject areas

- Goal Increase Time for Reading
  ·Make an effort to broaden the definition of reading Reading is not just instruction!

Nonformal Educators

- Strengthen nonformal network--men/color/youth Each one reach one

- Encourage staff to promote reading Building youth literacy

- Develop program strategies Dissemination (NetWords incl + +)

- Encourage youth leadership

Left:

Stakeholder groups placed their plans on flip charts

Right:

Some groups soon got out of control!

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Continued on page 4 . . .

Indiana State Reading Association Stakeholders presented a skit about building a Community of Readers.

Stakeholders continued...

Parents

- Goal: Development of "Family" Reading Network
  - ·Steps: Form a steering committee (volunteers) from other stakeholders who would identify resources/needs; advertise/promote across state.
  - ·Purpose: Bring clout and direction to family reading programs throughout the state.

Public Librarians

- Integrate young adolescent reading goals into our existing strategic plan.
- Incorporate common themes from Stakeholders' conference into Widening Circles grant proposal.
- Role models.
- Workshops at Indiana Library Federation/Association of Indiana Media Educators Annual Conference.
- Articles in state and regional publications
- Collaborate with other professional organizations.
- Marketing and advocacy--first phase of Indiana Library Federation's public awareness program received the John C. Dana Award.

Schools

- Public relations
- Interagency involvement
- Business/community partnership
- Restructuring existing environments
- Incentives/motivation

- Actions
  - ·Public relations--information to media --networking with existing staff/organization--business/community.
  - ·Interagency--(1) identify, (2) interface, (3) implement.
  - ·Partnerships--(1) business, (2) community, (3) political, (4) parents, (5) students.
  - ·Environment--(1) enhancement of existing skills, (2) add new information, (3) implementation and support.
  - ·Instructional Materials--(1) acquire, (2) use

School Library Media Specialists

- Promotion/Education
  - ·Rededication/recommitment of media specialists to nurturing of readers and promoting the joy of reading, Association of Indiana Media Educator activities and leadership conferences/workshops.
  - ·Promotion/collaboration with peers/school staff.
  - ·Outreach to community and businesses.
  - ·Outreach/promotion to professional organizations (with book lists).
- Access
  - ·Extended hours.
  - ·Funding--change law to allow purchase of books with Capital Projects Fund.
  - ·Eliminate Performance-Based Accreditation allowance of librarian's salary in reporting dollars spent on media program.

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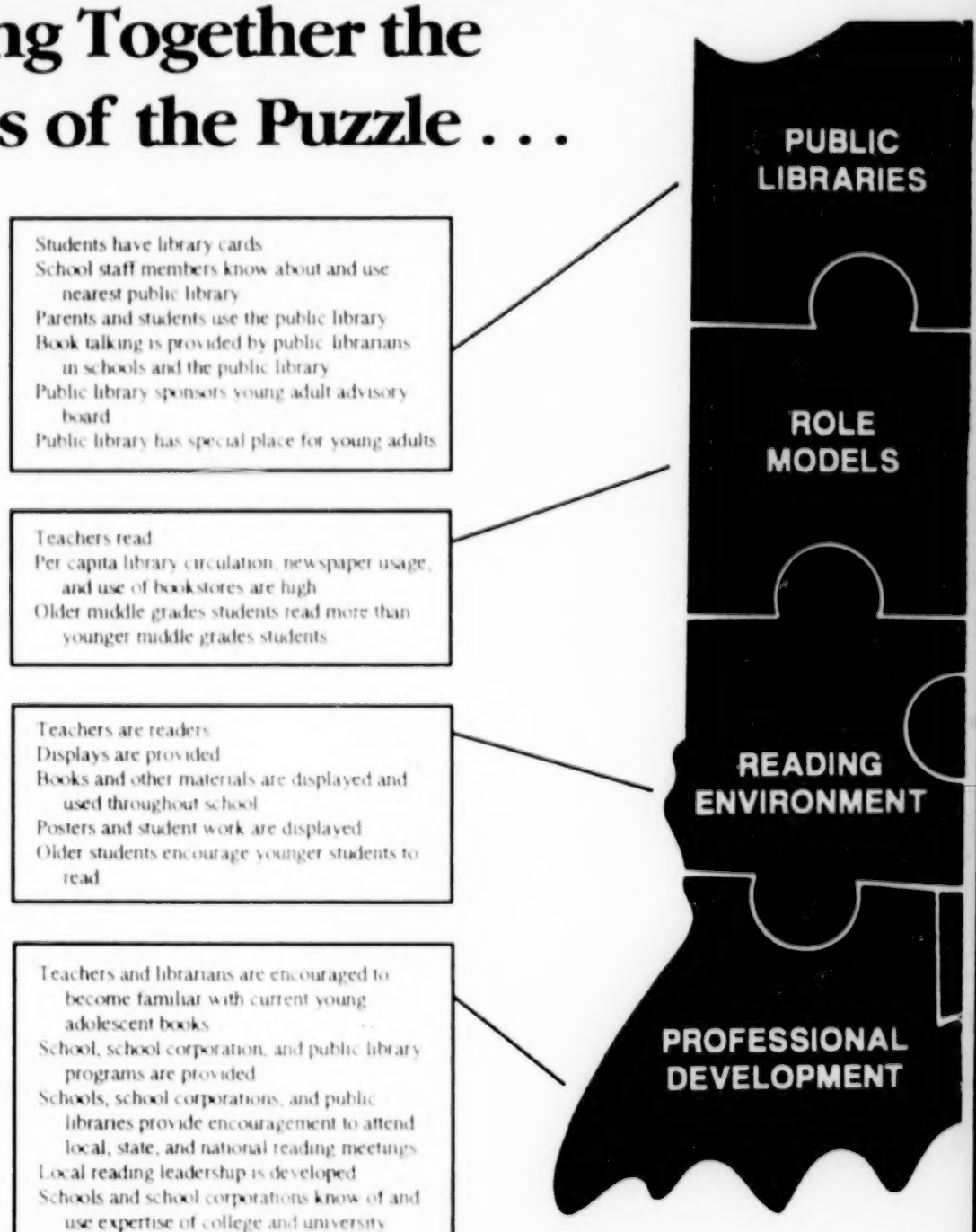
Putting Together the Pieces of the Puzzle . . .


PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Students have library cards
School staff members know about and use nearest public library
Parents and students use the public library
Book talking is provided by public librarians in schools and the public library
Public library sponsors young adult advisory board
Public library has special place for young adults
ROLE MODELS
Teachers read
Per capita library circulation, newspaper usage, and use of bookstores are high
Older middle grades students read more than younger middle grades students
READING ENVIRONMENT
Teachers are readers
Displays are provided
Books and other materials are displayed and used throughout school
Posters and student work are displayed
Older students encourage younger students to read
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Teachers and librarians are encouraged to become familiar with current young adolescent books
School, school corporation, and public library programs are provided
Schools, school corporations, and public libraries provide encouragement to attend local, state, and national reading meetings
Local reading leadership is developed
Schools and school corporations know of and use expertise of college and university reading professors

TIME

- Reading period is provided for all students.
- Chapter I services are utilized in school.
- Special help is provided for students whose reading proficiency is lower than needed for academic success.

ACCESS TO BOOKS

- Two books per student per year are purchased for school library.
- Classroom collections are provided.
- Circulation data is maintained.
- Parents are encouraged to provide books for their children.
- Public library usage is stressed.

COMMUNITY

- Reading is supported beyond the elementary grades.
- Books as well as computers are featured.
- News media are supportive.
- Adults are readers.
- Youth service agencies promote reading.

PARENTS

- Schools and public libraries provide lists of good young adolescent books for parents.
- Programs such as Parents Sharing Books are provided.
- Parents are involved in reading planning.
- Family involvement in school is assessed.
- Parents are readers.

Community [illegible] to [illegible] Indiana a [illegible] Adolescent Readers